

MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

September 2010

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation. The Program represents an administrative consolidation of six grant programs:

- Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Grant
- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)
- Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grants
- Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Program (MORE)
- Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program.

WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DOES THE PROGRAM SUPPORT?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides public infrastructure grants for publicly owned infrastructure including, but not limited to sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking facilities, site preparation and improvements on publicly owned land, demolition, pedestrian walkways, and water treatment systems. The program will consider any activity that was previously allowed by any of the aforementioned individual programs.

WHY CONSOLIDATE THESE PROGRAMS?

For the past two fiscal years, the individual program managers have met regularly, coordinated reviews, and shared information on a pilot program basis. That exercise revealed that there is significant value in centralizing the programs and streamlining the grant process.

Reduce the burden on municipalities. Rather than having to “shop around” to different agencies at different times trying to piece together enough resources to advance their objectives, cities and towns will now have a single entry point for state economic development grants, with a single application, and a single solicitation schedule. The streamlining will reduce municipal grant management burdens as well. The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will provide a single draw schedule, single set of grant rules, and a single set of reporting requirements.

Improve government efficiency. Each of these programs is designed to support job creation and economic development, but the programs were administered by different agencies, in different ways, at different times. Consolidating review and evaluation of these programs under the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development enables the state to ensure that these grants meet their intended purpose to cause an immediate impact on job creation and development in the state. By streamlining the application and review process, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will reduce duplication, improve accountability, and provide for the most effective management of state resources.

WILL THIS CONSOLIDATION MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS GRANT FUNDS?

No, the program will favor shovel-ready projects of all shapes and sizes. A certain percentage of funds will continue to be reserved for rural communities only, as was previously required by the STRAP Program. However the consolidation presents even greater funding opportunities for shovel ready projects in small communities.

DOES THIS CONSOLIDATION MEAN THERE ARE NET NEW FUNDS TO DISTRIBUTE?

Not immediately. Because the consolidation will honor grants that are currently under contract, the 2010 grant round will offer limited funding availability. However, future grant rounds will offer communities a

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better chance to fully fund projects that are ready to go. The 5 year capital plan will reveal the anticipated bond authorization for total grant spending issued under the MassWorks Infrastructure Program.

HOW WILL THE CONSOLIDATION IMPACT MY EXISTING GRANT CONTRACT?

It won't. All existing grant contracts will be honored by the contracting agency and will continue to be administered by the agency that originally issued it.

WHEN WILL THE MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM OPEN A FUNDING ROUND?

It is anticipated that the program will offer two annual funding rounds. A primary competitive funding round will be offered in September for projects that are ready to proceed as soon as weather permits during the upcoming construction season. A second competitive round will be held in January to consider projects that were not ready in September but are now prepared to proceed to construction during the upcoming construction season. **Only those projects that are prepared to proceed to construction in the upcoming spring should apply for consideration.**

Priority for funding will be given to projects that demonstrate consistency with Administration priorities and a reasonable level of shovel-readiness. A guidance document and schedule will be released soon.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY COMMUNITY RECEIVES A GRANT AWARD BUT THE PROJECT IS NOT SHOVEL-READY BY THE REQUIRED DATES?

In order to ensure that the maximum benefit is realized from available grant funds, it is important that grant awards are putting people to work right away.

Projects put forward for consideration in September will be expected to complete permitting and design, secure all necessary rights of way, and obligate all other funding sources by December 1 of that year. Any project that receives an award in September but does not demonstrate shovel-readiness by December 1st will lose its funding commitment for that year and will not be eligible to submit the project for funding consideration again until the following September. Funds originally committed during the September round to projects that are unable to demonstrate shovel-readiness by December 1st will be redistributed to other shovel-ready projects during the January funding round.

Projects put forward for consideration in January will be expected to complete permitting and design, secure all necessary rights of way, and obligate all other funding sources by April 1 of that year. Any project that receives an award in January but does not demonstrate shovel-readiness by April 1st will lose its funding commitment for that year.

HOW WILL THE CONSOLIDATION IMPACT MY PENDING GRANT APPLICATION?

All pending grant applications, such as STRAP and PWED applications that were solicited over the summer, will be transferred to the MassWorks Infrastructure Program. Applicants will receive notification of the transfer, a request for further information if needed, and a schedule for when decisions will be rendered. STRAP and PWED applications have already been substantially reviewed and those decisions will be rendered in a timely fashion.

WILL THIS PROGRAM CONSIDER COMMONWEALTH CAPITAL PROGRAM SCORES?

Yes, Commonwealth Capital scores will be considered as part of the MassWorks Infrastructure Program scoring system. Municipalities seeking state grants are encouraged to submit an FY11 Commonwealth Capital application immediately if they have not yet done so. Additional information on the FY11 Commonwealth Capital Program is available at <http://www.mass.gov/commcap>.

WHEN WILL THE CONSOLIDATION TAKE PLACE?

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The consolidation is effective immediately. A transition team representing the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development, Executive Office of Administration & Finance, and the Massachusetts Transportation Department (MassDOT) has been established to ensure that the consolidation is smooth and effective.

WHO WILL ADMINISTER THE CONSOLIDATED PROGRAM?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be administered by the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (ANF).

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Please visit www.mass.gov/eohed/infrastructure for additional information. The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will hold information sessions for municipalities across the state and the schedule will be posted online in the coming weeks. Interested parties are encouraged to attend.
